



WORK ON THE RESERVE

Work Party Sunday 2nd September Ian Watson

The first work party of the season and a good turnout – 14 in all. Our job was to rake and collect the long grass cut by Rob Hopkins in the fenced area at the end of the causeway that separates Stocker's and Bury lakes. For some reason Rob hadn't cut as large an area as usual, so, for the first time in living memory, we finished the work party by midday. This was the first work party since we moved our tools from Stocker's House garage to the fishermen's shed nearer Springwell Lane. We still met at Stocker's House, but the tools had to be loaded into the van during the week before.



Biscuits were up to their usual high standard - dark chocolate-coated ginger, jammy dodgers and garibaldi's!

Good work from Russell Ball, Orlando Bell, Julia Davies, Ken Davies, Miles Dodhia, Peter Ewer, Evelyn Fox, Dawn Goodair, Marcus King, Tony and Sheila Lee, Alison Marriott and Ian Watson. Welcome new members, hope we'll see you again.

Work Party Sunday 7th October Nigel Daley

On a beautiful, sunny Autumn morning, we enjoyed the second work party of this end of the year. We worked on the western bank of Stocker's Lake near the wooden bridge between the river and the lake. The idea was that we would clear much of the overhanging branches and undergrowth so that more light could get into that area encouraging a better spread of fauna and flora. Some branches were dropped into Stocker's to allow for a better habitat for the young fish and other branches and undergrowth that we removed were used to create a dead hedge where wire mesh was previously used to protect the bank. We had a huge turnout of volunteers who enjoyed the dappled sun of late summer and early autumn. There was some loose talk at coffee time that the biscuits were not up to scratch, (nevertheless the biscuits were all eaten) however, it was agreed that frankly, the sooner Ian was back in charge of buying the dark chocolate ginger biscuits the better, and oh yes Napoleon was right about an army marching on

their stomachs. (or at least I think that is what he said!).

Many thanks to the following for another brilliant Sunday; Helena Petch, Ray Lansdown, Ken Davies, Niles Dodhia, Allison Marriott, Sheila and Toni Lee, Russell Ball, Evelyn Fox, Jack Westbrook and last but by no means Josh Kalms from The Trust who advised and gently cajoled members.

EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

Wild Flower Walk Sunday 24th June Linda Ascroft

On a very hot Sunday, as England played Panama and a Bug Hunt was in progress in the Aquadrome, 8 people enjoyed the wildflower walk. Janet Ryall, stepped in at the last minute as our leader and we cannot thank her enough for sharing her wealth of knowledge. Sue Sanderson, who usually leads our Walks, had kindly walked me through the route ahead of Sunday and together we found at least 80 wildflowers and some grasses.



On the Sunday, armed with a list of these wildflowers, we walked the route, crossing off names and adding to the list as we went. **Hemp agrimony, creeping and spear thistles, mares tail, nipplewort, yellow meadow vetchling, yarrow, purple tufted vetch, watermint, birdsfoot trefoil, nettles**, to name but a few, were in abundance.

One of our great finds was the **viper's bugloss** (*Echium vulgare*) which was growing in just one place. A species of flowering plant in the borage family, it is an upright plant with blue flower spikes and its spotted stem is thought to resemble a viper. It is found on chalk grassland, sand dunes, cliffs and banks. We found it in one of the fields opposite to Stockers Lake.

Broad leaved helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*) was another highlight of the walk. It is a tall orchid found in woodland and scrub and has greenish, purple-tinged flowers that look a little 'drooping'. Strongly veined, oval leaves spiral around its stem. Found along the Stockers Lake path, heading towards the fisherman's car park. Unfortunately, it had not yet come into flower but I did return a month later to see it in flower.

One more find to mention is **common figwort** (on the banks of Stockers Lake). It is a pretty perennial herb

of the (*Scrophulariaceae*) or the figwort family. It can grow quite tall (up to 80 cm) and the two lipped flowers (upper lobes are red/brown and the lower lobes are greenish) are relatively small and inconspicuous, and occur in small clusters. Flowering time is June through to August.

Janet also helped us identify a few of the grasses found around Stockers Lake. These included, **cocksfoot, false brome, pendulous sedge, rye, phalaris and Yorkshire fog**. It was a most enjoyable afternoon.

A complete list of wildflowers and grasses identified is listed on Page 5

Butterfly & Dragonfly Walk August 12th



Unfortunately, owing to unforeseen circumstances, the Butterfly and Dragonfly Walk was cancelled,

because we couldn't find someone to lead it. We really do rely on our volunteers to get anything done!

Apologies to all those members who would have liked to have participated in the walk

FoSL Recruitment Days Sunday 20th May and 9th September - Nigel Daley

We have enjoyed two great recruitment days, either end of the glorious summer. Both days were extremely well supported by fellow members who gave freely of their time and worked very hard in getting over 80 new members to join our ranks over the two days. The sun shone on both days and Russell, our Recruitment officer organised and briefed the members making sure there was enough tea/coffee and biscuits to share even amongst our new recruits.

Many thanks to the following members for doing such a fantastic job getting our new members to sign up on the dotted line; Helena Petch, Nilesh Dodhia, Ian Watson, Allison Marriot, Evelyn Fox, Linda Ascroft, Tony and Sheila Lee, Jack Westbrook and Ken Davies.

A big welcome to all of our new members and we hope that you enjoy your first year's membership (and hopefully re-join in The New Year 2020). Please do feel free to come and join us on our Sunday work parties or help get involved on the committee in any way, shape or form.

OTHER FoSL NEWS

Cattle on the Reserve - Ian Watson

At last – a breakthrough! We hope to have cattle on the 3 meadows between the Lake and the River Colne by Spring next year. The necessary fencing will cost nearly £20,000 and we have secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to cover 60%. Thanks to our Chairman, Nigel, who met with Ewa Prokop of

Groundwork South who said that cattle grazing was just the sort of activity the Colne Valley Partnership Scheme wanted to encourage and that she would raise the matter with the HLF. Very successfully! So, our thanks and gratitude go to Ewa and Groundwork South and to the HLF. Not to mention our splendid Chairman who got the ball rolling.

I've been working on this project since 2013 in which year I found a local grazier, Nicholas Maksimovic, who keeps his cattle in Northwood. The cattle are called **Dexters**, a small Irish breed who are very good with people. I had hoped to have the cattle on the reserve by 1 August and our fencing contractor was all set to fence the meadows in July. However, bureaucratic delays, not of our making, mean that it is unlikely that the fencing will be erected before early 2019, with cattle grazing by Spring.

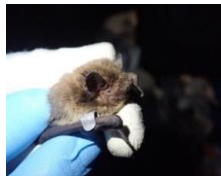
Cattle will stop our meadows reverting to scrub; will encourage the fine grasses which are being overgrown by coarse vegetation; will bring to the fore the many species of wild flowers that we know are there; and the cattle dung will support valuable insects and other creatures, particularly birds and bees, which feed on them; and will save us cutting the meadows at an annual cost of £1000. Not bad, eh?

Because of the rather annoying delays, we have had to have the meadows cut (by Nick Maksimovic) at a cost of £1000. And for the first time he will give the meadows a light raking to remove some of the thatch that has built up over the years when there were no cattle and indeed no meadow cutting.

Bats - Emma Brading

Myself and two new FoSL members, Jo Sykes and Jo Sutherland, have been involved with surveying bats in the Colne Valley as part of the National Nathusius' Monitoring Program. Nathusius' Pipistrelle is considered rare in the UK but may simply be under-recorded. It is often found at large waterbodies, particularly during its autumn migration period.

In August last year, a ringed Nathusius' bat from Latvia was captured at Stocker's Lake by a team led by Brian (photographer) and Patty Briggs. During the previous four trapping sessions, we also identified Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Daubenton's and Brown



Long Eared bats.

Unfortunately, the late summer surveys at Stocker's Lake haven't been too successful with one session being rained off and the other only capturing two bats the whole night! However, we have had more success at other sites. We will be continuing to survey until early October with another two sessions at the reserve.

I also had the pleasure of assisting Matt Dodds, from Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, in putting up 38 new bat boxes around the reserve. The project is part of a funding application to HS2 which will provide some environmental mitigation for the new high-speed train line.

Social Media

Join our new, members only, Facebook group to share photos, wildlife sightings and to connect with other FoSL members. To join, search "Friends of Stocker's Lake community forum" on Facebook. You can also find us on Twitter @FoStocker'sLake.

New Online Joiner Form - Simon Jones

In August a local resident, who would prefer not to be named, became our first FoSL member to join using our brand new, online joiner form. The form had been published only a matter of days before and hadn't yet been publicised. However, this lady found it anyway and joined up.

Once completed her application was emailed automatically to our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Dick Beeden. Dick advised her that she had been the first person to use our new online application process and asked how she had found it. She commented "I was walking round the lake with a friend and she told me I should support you by joining. So, I did! The online form was very easy and straightforward to complete."

You can find the new form by going to our website (fosl.org.uk), selecting "Contact or Join Us" from the main menu and from there clicking ONLINE MEMBERSHIP FORM in the second paragraph of text. Of course, if you are already a FoSL member then you don't need to do this. However, you could now tell your friends and neighbours that they can now quickly and easily join up without the need for any paperwork. So please do that. The more members we have the stronger an organisation we shall become.

Fundraising - Dick Beeden

Funds are still in the black as we are unlikely to be paying for cattle fencing until next year. We have just paid £1000 for meadow cutting and we are likely to be spending more on the herons' nests project - more cameras and/or a pan-tilt-zoom option.



Recent recruitment drive has boosted membership back up to over 600.

Subscriptions! Last chance reminder for people who have not yet paid their 2018 subscriptions. Please do so as it is so important.

FUTURE EVENTS

We are as usual preparing our programme for 2019 but this time co-ordinated with the HMWT, so that our programme will mention their events that concern Stocker's Lake and vice versa. Another example of our closer working relationship with the official managers of the Lake.

AGM 2019 - Diary Date

The 2019 AGM will be held at 19.30hrs on Thursday 18th April at Baptist Church, Field Way, Rickmansworth. The speaker will be Paul Barritt, leader of the Hallé orchestra. His subject will be 'Birds and Music'.



WILDFOWL WALK

Sunday January 13th 2019

Guided walk to look at wintering wildfowl on the Lake.

Meet: on the causeway 10am

WORK PARTIES

Sunday November 4th 2018

Sunday December 2nd 2018

Sunday January 6th 2019

Meet: 0955hrs usually by Stocker's House (next to Stocker's Lock) but it is a good idea to check with Emma Brading (07428 790 460) before the date just in case we have changed the meeting place.

COMMITTEE

Nigel Daley (Chairman)	01923 282844
Ian Watson (Vice chairman)	01923 282136
Dick Beeden (Treasurer)	208 421 9958
Simon Jones (Web site)	01923 285763
Trish Jeneid (Newsletter editor, posters)	01923 770221
Emma Brading (Volunteers organiser)	07428 790460
Linda Ascroft (Events organiser)	07791 971323
Russell Ball (Recruitment)	07884 426671
Steve Carter (Wildlife recorder)	07917 796976
Larry Hurst	01923 848440

Commented [PJ1]:

Commented [PJ2R1]:

Stocker's Lake Bird Report 2017

Steve Carter

The year started with a dozen **Red Crested Pochards**, but no partridge in a pear tree. Up to **140 Wigeon** and a **red head Smew**. Wildlife counts were relatively high. The spring held **28 Little Egrets** at roost, warblers arriving in April, **Cuckoos** in May and a breeding **Golden eye** on adjacent Springwell Lake. June, July and August provided a variety of **warblers** and sightings of up to **3 red eared terrapins**. Large numbers of **black headed gulls** and **common terns** suffering from predators, amongst them **coots**. August highlights were a **Sparrowhawk** breeding nearby and **Muntjac** on the reserve. September, no early passage of migrants till on the 21st when a mixed **hirundine flock** obliged, a **stonechat** and **kestrel** were at Stocker's farm. October increased numbers of **greylags** and **cormorants**, flocking **long tailed tits** and **4 cetti's warblers** along the river with redwing, **30 red crested pochards** on adjacent Bury Lake. November still relatively mild, working parties at the lake in full swing. A **Peregrine** flew over and Country File were on the reserve. Small numbers of **Siskins** arriving with the **odd redpoll**. **Goldeneyes** increasing, immature males, mid-month along with an appearance of the **Great White Egret** probably the long staying Maple Lodge individual. Months end **Chiffchaffs** calling along the Colne, **Red crested pochards up to 32** on Bury a single **Goosander** on Springwell and **Siskins** increasing. December started cold then mild with rain and gales, mid-month a few **fieldfare** and **redwing, goldeneye increasing up to 8** along with a **few Water Rail**.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE Good numbers bred nearly all year up to 13 birds in winter juveniles present till December. 25 birds in November.

LITTLE GREBE 2 pairs seen in March max

CORMORANT Up to 25 wintering birds have bred seen eating Pike and Tench.

LITTLE EGRET Highest count up to 28 birds roosting, good numbers of breeding birds

GREAT WHITE EGRET One sighting of the Maple Lodge individual in November

GREY HERON Heronry consisted of least 30 birds

MUTE SWAN Breeding pairs Wintering in greater numbers on Bury Lake. 1 pair had 5 cygnets in May

GREYLAG GEESE 25 birds seen on th14th of September 40 on 30th Jan

CANADA GEESE Common breeder in good numbers

EGYPTIAN GOOSE A maximum of 9 birds of this increasing Goose.

BARNACLE GOOSE One record probable escape

WIGEON Highest count 140

MALLARD Wildfowl counts ie11 and 12 seem low for this common species.

GADWALL 31 was the highest count of this common duck species

SHOVELER This common dabbler feeds explosively in circles 68 and 53 in Oct and Nov

COMMON TEAL Always low numbers of this species

MANDARIN 1 Bird Seen in April

RED CRESTED POCHARD Averaging a dozen on Stocker's however 32 present on adjacent Bury GP.

POCHARD Breeding in June 1 female with 2 juvs 8 wildfowl count

TUFTED DUCK Highest count of 74 birds in the Winter

GOLDENEYE Highest count up to 17 individuals a female with 7 young once again on Springwell Lake

SMEW 1 Red head seen in January

1 Individual in January

RED KITE 5 birds seen in January

SPARROWHAWK A regular species bred in Alder woodland on Bury Lake seen hunting regularly.

BUZZARD 2 birds seen in Feb plus other singles

OSPREY 1 Sighting in May

KESTREL A few records of this common species

HOBBY 4 Sightings in the summer.

PEREGRINE 2 Sightings in Jan and 1 in November when 'Country File' was present.

MERLIN A female seen from the kingfisher hide.

WATER RAIL up to 3 birds seen over the winter

MOORHEN 8 birds a maximum under recorded

COOT 135 in October numbers down on previous years.

OYSTERCATCHER 2 Max Spring thru Summer

LAPWING Up to at least 30 birds early winter

COMMON SANDPIPER 3 Records for this year

GREEN SANDPIPER 1 sighting in July

COMMON SNIPE 1 record

JACK SNIPE 1 February record

GREAT SKUA On the21st of August by DB Hale

BLACK HEADED GULL highest count 70 approx.

breeding regular on rafts designed for terns

COMMON GULL Highest count of 13

HERRING GULL Highest count of 6

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL Up to 8 birds maximum

GREATER BLACK BACKED GULL Highest count of 17

YELLOW LEGGED GULL 1 on the 12th of Jan

COMMON TERN Common breeder on rafts provided heavily predated this year and displaced by black headed gulls.

BLACK TERN 1 on the 9th of May

WOOD PIGEON Common resident

CUCKOO 2 Birds recorded in May

RING NECKED PARAKEETS Increasing population 13 max

LITTLE OWL One individual on Stockers farm

SWIFT Highest count of 40 in June

KINGFISHER Highest daily count 3 mostly along the Colne.

GREEN WOODPECKER More heard than seen also opposite canal in Garrets Wood.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER Commonest woodpecker seen regularly

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER 1 in March, 2 in April
SAND MARTIN A rare hirundine 3 in July 20 in September
SWALLOW 1st 30th March up to a dozen bred at Stockers farm
HOUSE MARTIN 50 in September
MEADOW PIPIT Small flock around 12 at farm.
PIED WAGTAIL Under recorded
GREY WAGTAIL Few records mostly near canal
WREN Common breeding species
DUNNOCK Common resident
ROBIN Common resident
STONECHAT One at Stockers farm
WHINCHAT August and Sept records at the farm
BLACKBIRD Common breeder
FIELDFARE Lower numbers this year a few along the Colne in Hawthorns
REDWING More numbers, above 60 in February
SONG THRUSH Under recorded a few records only
CETTI'S WARBLER A maximum of 5 singing individuals
SEDGE WARBLER 6 singing birds max.
REED WARBLER Common summer resident
GARDEN WARBLER 5 Singing birds in May
LESSER WHITETHROAT One April record
WHITETHROAT A few records in May
BLACKCAP A maximum of 8 birds in the summer
WILLOW WARBLER Up to 3 birds calling
NIGHTINGALE 1 bird heard in May
CHIFFCHAFF Wintering along the Colne seen in December Highest count 6 in March
GOLDCRESTS Seen flocking with tits in Winter
SPOTTED FLYCATCHER A single record

BLUE TIT Common passerine seen at feeders
GREAT TIT Common passerine
LONG TAILED TIT Seen in family parties in winter and summer.
NUTHATCH Breeding pairs calling and on feeders
TREE CREEPER A pair seen in March
STARLING Decreasing resident although seen roosting over Springwell reed bed
JAY A number of birds seen in the Alder woodland
MAGPIE Common breeding resident
RAVEN A few sightings this year
CARRION CROW Common resident
HOUSE SPARROW Always at Stockers House
CHAFFINCH Seen in Alders in Winter
SISKIN Big flocks up to 80 in Winter
GOLDFINCH Flocking with Siskins common species
BULLFINCH Numbers improving recently 3 birds in March 2 males and 1 female.
GREENFINCH 1 record in March
LESSER REDPOLL 1 Sighting in Alders with Goldfinch
LINNET Small flock at Stockers Farm
REED BUNTING Breeding bird singing males in Spring
BLACK SWAN Escapee

CONTRIBUTORS: *W.Bishop, S.Knott, C.Ruiss R.Ness, G.Young, T.Hulls M.Barnett, J.Thompson, B.Harris, P.Ranger, C.Sharp, L.Evans., S.Carter, G.Lapworth, J.Bailey, R.Hopkins, T.Hill, G.Clark, A.Marrett, J.Gundersen, D.Neal, S.Keenen, J.Newson, and so many more.*
Friends of Stocker's Lake, British Airways AC, Herts and Middx Trust, etc.
Please forgive any missed records and Observers.

LIST OF WILDFLOWERS IDENTIFIED ON THE WALK ON SUNDAY 24TH JUNE

Balsam
 Bedstraw, Common, Hedge, Lady's
 Birdsfoot trefoil
 Black Horehound
 Butterbur
 Cleavers (goose grass)
 Clematis Travellers Joy
 Comfrey, Russian (purple), White
 Common fleabane
 Crane's bill, Dove's foot, Hedge, Meadow
 Creeping buttercup
 Creeping cinquefoil
 Dark Mullein
 Dittander or Peppergrass
 Docks: Burdock, Wood dock
 Dogs Mercury
 Figwort
 Foxglove
 Goats rue
 Gypsy wort
 Hawkweed
 Helleborine (broad-leaved)
 Hemlock water dropwort (poisonous)
 Hemp Agrimony
 Herb Bennet or (Wood avens)
 Herb Robert
 Hogweed
 Iris, Stinking
 Ivy, Ground

Knapweed
 Meadow sweet
 Mugwort
 Mustard, Hedge, Garlic
 Nightshade, Bitter sweet, Enchanting
 Nipplewort
 Oxeye daisy
 Ox tongue
 Parsley Cow, Upright Hedge
 Pineapple weed
 Plantain Broad-leaved, Rib-leaved, Water,
 Purple Loosestrife
 Purple tufted vetch
 Ragwort, Hairy Ragwort
 Red bartsia
 Sedge, Large, Remote, Small,
 Self-heal
 Silverweed
 Smooth Hawksbeard
 Speedwell, Germander, Thyme leaved
 Stitchwort
 Thistle, Creeping, Spear
 Viper's bugloss
 Yarrow
 Yellow meadow vetchling
 Valerian, Common
 Water mint
 White dead-nettle
 Willow-herb, Hairy, Great
 Woodruff Woundwort, Hedge, Mars
Grasses Cocksfoot / False brome / Pendulous sedge /Phalaris
 /Rye /Yorkshire fog